

John D. Saccomando
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy
Right Wing

Lieutenant Commander John Saccomando is a native of Buffalo, New York, and spent the first part of his childhood there. He then moved to Burke, Virginia, where he graduated from James W. Robinson Secondary in 1990. He attended the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Georgia, and graduated with honors earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Mathematics with minors in History and American Literature. He earned his commission upon graduation via the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) in September 1994.

John first reported to the Georgia Tech Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Unit as a Naval Science instructor. In May 1995, he reported to flight school at Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida. Shortly thereafter, he attended primary flight training at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas, and then transferred to NAS Meridian, Mississippi, for intermediate and advanced flight training. While there, he flew the T-2C Buckeye and TA-4J Skyhawk and was awarded the *Chief of Naval Aviation Training's Top Gun Award* for outstanding air combat performance and the *Commodore's Battle "E" Award* for precision bombing. He earned his wings of gold in May 1997. John then reported to Fighter Squadron 101 (VF 101), the "Grim Reapers," at NAS Oceana, Virginia, for training in the F-14D Tomcat.

After completing his initial qualification, John reported to the VF 213 "Blacklions" where he served as the Naval Air Training and Operation Procedures Standardization (NATOPS) officer, line/troubleshooter division officer, air-to-ground weapons training officer, forward air controller (airborne) training officer and head landing signals officer. While attached to VF 213, John completed two extended deployments aboard the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), flying more than 50 combat missions in support of *Operations Desert Fox*, *Southern Watch*, and *Enduring Freedom*.

In January 2002, John returned to VF 101 as an F-14 Tomcat flight instructor. While at VF 101, John served as aircraft division officer, weapons and combat systems phase leader, and landing signals officer. Along with teaching replacement radar intercept officers the fundamentals of the F-14A/B/D Tomcat, John also taught replacement pilots air combat maneuvering and how to land Tomcats on aircraft carriers during both day and night operations. In January 2003, John was selected for the F-14 Tomcat Demonstration Team. While on the team, John flew more than 40 flight demonstrations in the F-14D Tomcat, performing in front of more than five million spectators.

John joined the Blue Angels in September 2003. He has accumulated more than 2,500 flight hours and 292 carrier arrested landings. His decorations include the Air Medal (Combat Distinguishing Device), four Strike Flight Air Medals, two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals (Combat Distinguishing Device), two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, and various personal and unit awards.